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FM AMEMBASSY VATICAN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0692  
INFO RUEHSB/AMEMBASSY HARARE PRIORITY 0002  
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 0005  
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLAD COLLECTIVE  
RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE  
RUEHROV/AMEMBASSY VATICAN 0722

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 3/23/2017  
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SUBJECT: ZIMBABWE: HOLY SEE WAITING FOR OK FROM BISHOPS

REF: A. VATICAN 58; B. STATE 36885; C. MARTIN-TRENKLE MAR 23 TELCON

CLASSIFIED BY: Peter Martin, Pol/Econ Chief, Vatican, State.  
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

[11](#). (C) In response to ref (b) points, Holy See deputy foreign minister equivalent Pietro Parolin told the Charge March 23 that the Holy See was considering speaking out further on Zimbabwe, but felt compelled to wait until it got the "green light" from the Zimbabwe bishops to do so. He noted the Holy See's recognition of the seriousness of the situation, and alluded to a similar demarche he had received from the British (ref a). He also volunteered that the pope's Easter message (ref a) would be an ideal time for the pontiff to speak out.

[12](#). (C) Parolin said he had no reason to think that the bishops would oppose the Holy See's speaking out, but he had to be sure that the Vatican wouldn't be complicating matters for the local Church. He said that some had argued that the local Church (he mentioned Bishop Pius Alick Ncube of Bulawayo) was strong enough to stand up to Mugabe, and a word from the Vatican was just the boost it needed. Even so, Parolin said, the Holy See needed to hear that from the bishops themselves. He noted that nuncio to Zimbabwe Adams is following events closely, but claimed that nuncio to South Africa Green had little role to play.

[13](#). (C) Comment: Parolin's comments track with the Holy See's traditional preference not to get out in front of the local bishops. We defer to Embassy Harare, but note that from our perspective direct contact with the bishops, or contact through Archbishop Adams seems the likeliest way to proceed. We still believe nuncio to South Africa Green might have a useful role to play, but suggest approaching him with the stated intention of simply "keeping him in the loop". He may then have some useful input. Contact with other prelates who might have good contact with the Zimbabwe bishops could also be useful (ref c).

SANDROLINI